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Recent developments in the theoretical study of film have shifted attention from the analysis of content to the significance of the way film is constructed. Stephen Heath discusses these developments in context of their application to the film Jaws

Every review of the film Jaws begins with some reference to its status as the film, not also much super-production as super-product, the box-office record-breaker expected to gross more than a quarter of a billion dollars. But the product also means (part of its meansing, of course, is to be "the most profitable movie in history"), and means as entertainment, a moving and pleasurable experience a hadysis must grasp this pleasure-meaning. Commodity complex, and recent developments in film theory—centred in Britain, with a powerful influence in the United States, pround the work of the journal Screen, and deeding from there into film teaching—have been concerned to pose precisely the problems which arise from such an emphasis. Epitome of "cinema", Jaws can perhaps prowing a focus for discussion that will allow something of these problems to be under-til

At one level, the ideology of Jaws is clear enough, the province of a traditional content analysis". Jaws is a Watergate Ilm: Mayor Larry Vaughan of Amity. Long sland, serves his electors ("Amity needs ummer dollars") by hushing up a shark ttack ("I was acting in the town's best inteck ("I was acting in the town's best inteck and, very quickly, not a single point of black and, very quickly, not a single coman in the film—in the person of police hief Martin Brody will recognize its combiner of a boy who dies when the beaches ay open) and pull the town through with arrand-decency.

Order is fragile but possible, mistakes are ade (Vaughan is simply weak, caught out rving his town, and Brody with him; the il is something else, call it a shark) but u—Brody—can redeven them (kill die irk), and better than any screwball romtic myth (Quint, a vague memory of Moby ike) or any expert (Hooper, the whiz-kid th all the equipment finally defeated by shark).

ot and psychoanalysis on the terrain of Marxism tics—40 which Metz's own later work has to responded, was to allow the "language-and-stood as that of the study of film as specific le signifying indicates the recognition of film as system or series of systems of meaning, film as articulation. Practice stresses the refuses to hold under the assumption of process of this articulation, which it thus a notions such as "representation" and "expression"; it takes film as awork of production of meanings and in so doing brings into the analysis the question of the position-seriation of the subject, what kind of "reader" and "author" it constructs. Find the work it engages, the differences it sustains with other signifying practices. This is some aesthetic idea of a pure cinematicity of the work in the read of a pure cinematicity of a construction which has often become a way a decided in literary criticism from Russian of avoiding crucial issues of production and structuralist poetics"). Specificity here is semiotic, and a semior of avoiding crucial issues of production and situation of the analysis of film as signifying practices. Specificity here is semiotic, and a semior of avoiding crucial issues of production and situation and a semior of the subject of the subject of the subject of the matters of exercised musical sound, recorded musical sound, recorded musical sound, and writing; the latter as, for example, in the prominent in the practicular inscriptions of subject and uncan. It is an and independent of subject and uncan. It is an and independent of subject and uncan. It is an and independent of subject and uncan. It is an and independent of subject and uncan. It is an and independent of the subject and uncan. It is an analysis of an interest of subject and uncan. It is an analysis of an interest of subject and uncan. It is an analysis of an interest of subject and uncan. It is an analysis of an interest of subject and uncan. It is an analysis of subject and uncan. It is an analysis and interest of subject and u

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ds initial premise: the arrival of the shark, it y At the same time, however, it sets off a nat as figures over the film.

Thus, for example, the presence of the shark is given in the very first shot with the violent underwater movement tied to no human point of view, and the underwater shot is then used in the first part of the film to signify the imminence of altack we are placed as the shark as it rises of the girl and, later, to the little boy on the float.

Once systematized, it can be used to the cheat: it occurs to confirm the second day time beach attack, but this is only two boys with an imitation fin. More importantly, the shot binds up with an immediate marking out, in the sequence, of a danger of sexuality and the displacement of the latter onto the shark: the girl leads the boy on; it is as she strips, he follows with "I'm coming on the strips, he follows with "I'm coming to the strips he st

beach on the sighting of a shark in "Jaws".

rk. "what is represented" than of positioning a narrative in cinema is first and foremost the image-flow, the laying out of an intelligibility, the conversion of seen into scene as the direct the conversion of seen into scene as the direct the perspective of intelligibility is crucial. The perspective of intelligibility is crucial. Of the perspective of intelligibility is crucial. Of or vision as truth (Lumière aims "to repronaiso produce discontinuities, disruptions, also produce discontinuities, disruptions, shocks". Hence, from the start, there is to establish ways for holding a film's relavious as the coherence of the subject-eye and 180 degree rules, codes of framing, and of the start of the subject-eye and 180 degree rules, codes of framing, and of

red, the drama of vision becomes a con-reflexive fascination in films. Hitch-Rear Window in a supreme example,

make) or any expert (Hooper, the whitz-kid with all the equipment finally defeated by the shark).

Other elements extend from this core with a symptomatic rightness as for example, the story Quint tells of the sinking of the slowy functions the Hiroshima bomb ("1,100 men went into the water, 360 men came out, anyway we delivered the bomb"). The story functions to motivate Quint's character as determined shark-killer, but does so excessively, placing—in the play between Quint, Hooper and Brody, as they wait out at sea in the summer of America's final year in Vietnam—destruction and conscience and manliness and menace and just doing-the-job (the scene ends with the three men join-ing in a song—"Show me the way to go home "—interrupted by the shark outside This clear ideology, the narrative image of the film, is made up of such elements held in a loose coherence round the central core, and working in the space of the film. It is the "working-space" that is important; to remain at the level of a content analysis in these terms is to full to engage with the ideological operation of the film, its production, as also—the two running together as a set of relations—with the pleasure derived from this film about a shark and its pursuers. In short, it is to fail to engage with the fact of film has been the concern of film theory in its attempts to define film as a specific object of study, and it is in this context that one can grasp the initial role of structuralist made in film. In particular, attention was is

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on of the ways in which meanings are articulated in film. In particular, attention was given to the codes of the image (the construction) of iconic signs, problems of denotation and connotation) and to the codes of the transgement of film in sequences (the definition of syntagmatic units, the structures of ilm narrative).

This last was a part of the work of the rench theoretician Christian Metz whose transgrange and Cincma, published in 1971, is a trigorous investigation of the whole idea of cinema as language, a mapping out of the difficulties involved in the linguistic malogy, in order to give precision to the use of the term "language" in respect of ilm. ing and identice Discovered to the conditions of subject and meaning and discology. Directed in this way, the study of film is of neither "contenus" nor the forms but, breaking the deadlock of that reprocess.

Such a direction can further be seen as bolding in a fundamental intersection three as component areas: the conditions of film process at film products but these products mean and a sell on meaning and pleasure; between its and the general apparatus of cinema. As was the conditions of the process at film products but these products mean and a sell on meaning and pleasure; between its and the general apparatus of cinema. As was the machine.

This category is cinema fiself, understood in its stock of constraints and definitions, its possibilities and points of determination, with respect to which film can be distinguished as specific signifying practice and a perticular film scized dialectically in its operation. Each of the three areas can bring with it its own set of tasks and study process is constraintly important.

In the light of these propositions, let us consteantly important.

In the light of these propositions, let us constraintly important.

Space will not permit detailed analysis of the movement of its filmic system; one or the constraint of the movement of its filmic system; one or the film can be distinguished as the companiment of ominous of the movement of some consideration of machine and industry, indications that will be deversible of the movement of its filmic system; one or the film can be distinguished as the companiment of ominous of the movement of some consideration of machine recommendation with process to the accompaniment of ominous of the movement of the state that the canner and industry, indications must serve to suggest the terms of that movement, and lead on to some consideration of machine recommendation of the party in the cut is heavily marked by changes in colour, from sit could be party of the movement of the party of the object of his gaze, followed by a cut in the obj

Language and Cinema rests firmly (and finely) within the limits of "structuralist" somiological description, focused on the object cinema, as opposed to the operation cinema. Its effect, nevertheless, taken in conjunction with surrounding theoretical

onto the shurk: the girl leads the boy on; is as she strips, he follows with "I'm coming; let "I'm definitely coming,"; when she is attacked, he lies on the beach moaning again "I'm coming, I'm coming as the duty of patrolman finishes reading a story about at a woman who castrates an assailant with a woman who castrates an assailant with a kinfe secreted in her hair).

So One inexorable movement of the film is the then to get rid of women; in an exact or rhyming inversion of the girl's provocative or rhyming inversion of the girl's provocative or rhyming inversion of the girl's hark-hung the stark is ready, Brody's wife runs—with a similar est following shot, now from left to right—catavay from the sea, out of Quint's shark-hung thair ("Here's to swimming with bowlegged of women!"), out of the film, as the men set off to deal with the evil, the boat seen in long shot through a trophy pair of shark's of Jaws.

The stress on dismemberment—after the

girl, all the victims are male and the focus is on losing legs—finds its resonance in this context, as too does the scene where Quint and Hooper compare shark wounds (and drink to their legs!), as again does the apparently gratuitous image of the old man in the bathing cap with hanging breasts, who comes to taunt Brody with his fear of the water.

This excess over the narrative in the opening sequence disturbs the coherence of the cud. In the former we look out with the boy over the menacing sea (a shot elsewhere repeated from Brody's point of view); in the latter we look with Brody and Hooper from the sea back to the land, the menace of destroyed, Brody's fear overcome ("I used to hate the water, I can't imagine why"); a closing—rhynningly inverted—high-angle shot is establishes the beach again, empty and clean. But what cannot be resolved is the whole shark displacement, the elements of the first sequence are left hanging and no woman segmence are left hanging and no woman similar.

Such indications how in to show compething the state of the first of the first of the sequence are left hanging and no woman segments back—here too Jaws is a white male of the first of the first of the first indications have the sequence are left hanging and no woman sequence are here too Jaws is a white male of the first the sequence are left hanging and no woman sequence are left hanging and left hanging an

Such indications begin to show something of the multiple series working over the narrative in a film text, series that combine across the different matters of expression and codes in rhymes, repetitions, turns. In fact, film is potentially a veritable flux of affects, a plurality of intensities, and narrative functions to contain that affectivity, which is thus the recreleased as "excess", "disturbance", "figure"—symptomatic demonstrations of the work of containment.

This engages the intersection with cinema the work of containment is not essential to cinema, but historically the latter has been developed and exploited as a narrative furnation of the work dispersion, for representation, where e representation is less immediately a matter of

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stant reriextive traction in rilms, mitch cock's Rear Window in a supreme example, but Jaws is also relevant with its play on the unseen and unforesecable, the hidden shark and the moments of violent irruption—the corpse in the boat-hull, the shark rearing from the water close behind Brody as he shovets chum.

is marized in the images flickeringly reflected ct on Brody's glasses as he skims through the pages of the books about sharks, occasionally is fixing a corresponding image—the whole film are except, precisely, for Brody, the vision to come, the film's "resolution".

Film is the constant process of a phasing-in of vision, the pleasure of that process—movement and fixity and movement again, from fragment (actually thematized in Jaws as of the subject, particular closures of desire. But genres are also necessities of the jubilations of the subject, particular closures of the process, shifting regulations of the subject, particular closures of the industry, the optimal exploitation of the product tion apparatus requiring the containment of creative work within established frameworks, once more to the complex of intersection: of films-are industrial products, and they mean, this yielding the return that allows the perpetuation of the industry (which is why part of the meaning of Jaws is to be the most profitable movie); a film is not reduction by part of the meaning of Jaws is to be the most profitable movie); a film is not reducting of the fact of film in theory (which is why part of the meaning of Jaws is to be the most profitable movie); a film is not reducting of the fact of film in these terms.

Jaws has placed the focus here on the strateging of the fact of film in these terms.

Jaws has placed the focus here on the strateging of the fact of film in these terms.

Jaws has placed the focus here on the strateging its very edge; as it has too, dialectically, to turn back into them, a moment of their educates, other cinema. But it must be those practices, which must indeed provide is strategies, its frictions, its pleasure, can have an importance in this context—if only that study be directed, critically and specifically and speci

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